

carefully, as the evening  
before I'd put down his beard  
in front of patricia, so he  
knew I was shooting on  
his candypants whore  
& he collected guns & only  
needed an excuse to Come  
with one to his shoulder &  
my scheming meat framing  
his .44 bore

the back screendoor squeak-  
ed & sung & a tic turned me  
halfway to run till I heard  
her sick starvingdog call ...

-- Hurry, Baby, Come! Tommy's  
gone for the day ...

each fated step was quick  
to the door as I reached  
for her sweaty red sunsuit  
& her eager wet smile

then Tommy stepped from  
behind the blind screen & I  
cursed the Time we were born  
in -- the wars that had trained  
us & the hate that we had  
as the hot highpowered slug  
dug deep in my belly & my  
last view of our Time was  
my wild final Come, mirrored  
slack-jawed & sleepy in the  
half-lidded eyes of Patricia  
& Tommy & the world as it  
died

6/65

just lately  
I've seen through it  
I've seen through it all  
once, you know  
I was quite religious  
but now  
there is nothing, nothing

yet still I pray

O Nothing, that  
which is Cipher, which  
is Naught

please  
do not slay me with your  
drab despicable days of  
loss, of dumb terror  
fulfilled, of pain ...

You!               Peasants!  
                      you can't  
know how much I need  
to laugh  
                      how badly I only  
want    to    laugh

& what if the dam should  
suddenly burst  
if suddenly I should run  
headlong, frothing, haphazardly  
hurling shrapnel gredades  
into high-noon crowds?  
if suddenly tossing aside  
the dull ugly ache of it  
all, I equalled the senseless  
with my brute senseless act?

O My, wouldn't I  
shine?               wouldn't  
I shine then?  
wouldn't it be I then who  
had created God  
at last?

8/65

-- William Wantling

Normal, Illinois

Waiting

the sounds of dusk   the scent  
of shadows touching grass  
a clock   my eyes   the place  
where that highway dips  
and bends and where cars  
seem to freeze, for one  
long moment fail to grow  
before their windshields come  
and pass this spot: there are  
so many faces in this lonely  
world that are not you

-- Dennis Trudell

Iowa City, Iowa